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TREATISE

ON THE

DISMAL EFFECTS

O F

Low-Spiritedness.

In which is contained,
Many Useful HINTS for preventing that
Disagreeable and Destructive DISORDER
from taking Root in the Human System;
as well as for Eradicating it, where it has
gained any Ascendancy.

*—Why do I yield to that Suggestion
Whose horrid Image doth unfix my Hair,
And make my seated Heart knock at my Ribs,
Against the Use of Nature?—Present Feats
Are less than horrible Imaginings.*

*—Function
Is smother'd in Surmise; and nothing is,
But what is not.* SHAKESPEARE.


L O N D O N:
Printed for W. OWEN, at Homer's Head, near
Temple-Bar.

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DISMAL EFFECTS

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Wm. O'Connell, at Lincoln's Head, near
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INTRODUCTION.



OW unhappy, how miserable, are Mankind above all other created Beings, of which we have any Knowledge! By our Make as Men, by the Laws of that System of which we are a Part, we are subject to many and various Evils, both natural and moral. Hopes, Fears, Disappointments, Diseases, Casualties, and Death, are the sure, the inevitable Portion, of all the Sons of Adam. These, and all the various Forms into which they are diversified, we enjoy in common with the rest of the Creation, that are subject to the Laws of the Animal Economy. But there is a Class of Evils peculiar to ourselves, much more numerous, and in their Effects much more fatal, which shroud the small Portion of Felicity that Nature has allotted us on this Side the Grave, to which all others are meer Strangers; and no Wonder they should, since these

We are subject to many natural Evils.

B

Evils

Evils are not the Product of Nature, nor the Result of our particular Make, but take their Rise from a gross Abuse of our Faculties, a Perversion of the Means and Instruments of our Happiness, from Whim, Folly, Caprice, and a vitiated, depraved Imagination.

To Evils,
arising from
the Abuse of
the Passions.

How numerous the Train of Wants! What a monstrous Portion of Woe do we daily heap up to ourselves, by the Abuse of our Passions, and Appetites! These were bestowed upon us as the Means to support this Frame, and as the Instruments of Pleasure and Delight to the rational Mind: Yet, how dire the Calamities! and how much Misery do we create to ourselves, and all about us, by submitting to their Dictates without the Direction of our Reason, and applying them to Purposes that Nature never intended them? To this Source, to this Mis-application of our Faculties, are owing all the Evils that plague Society, all the Wickedness, Oppression, and Injustice, that disturb the public Peace of Kingdoms; and all the Jarrs, Feuds, and Animosities, that imbitter every Enjoyment of domestic Life. Monstrous as these Evils are, that flow from this Source, they are in some measure to be accounted for from rational Principles: We know what is to be expected from the Predominancy of Pride, Malice, Lust, Anger, Envy,

vy, or Revenge, and may guard ourselves against the Attacks of a Man, under the Dominion of all, or any of these Fiend-like Habits or Affections ; but there is a Species of Evil to which Man is subject, that we can, with Difficulty, trace to any Source, against the Effects of which its impossible to have any Guard, as the Agent is governed by no Principle, but actuated by Whim, Caprice, and a vitiated Imagination.

ALL other Ills have their Foundation in Nature, are in some Degree real ; but Man, industrious in finding out new Ways to plague himself and Society, has found out a Source of Misfortunes purely imaginary, a Train of Mischiefs, which though they have no Existence in themselves, are only the Creatures of his Brain ; yet by his Management are pregnant with real Torments, and productive of a more numerous Tribe of Ills, than all others to which he is subject as a Man.

Evils arising
from Whim
and Caprice.

How often do we barter real Happiness for Misery and Misfortune, to gratify some Whim, some trifling Caprice, that seizes the Fancy, without being able to account to our Understanding how such Foibles can in any Degree contribute to our Felicity, and yet we pursue these deluding Visions of the Imagination with the same Warmth

The Evils
flowing
from Low-
spiritedness
worse than
all these,

and Zeal, as if we had previously demonstrated them the Means of the greatest Good, 'till fatal Experience has taught us their Folly, and real Misery has taken Place of our promised Joy ! But even in these whimsical Capricio's, Pleasure is proposed, Happiness is designed in the End, or the Means ; but how shall we account for that Disposition of Mind, that gloomy Habit of the Soul, that delights in Torment, and is anxious to find out Means to banish every chearful Thought, that is pleased with no present Enjoyment, but what increases the melancholly Cloud, nor can have any Relish to any future Hope, but what the sick Fancy paints full of Horror and Misery. This is the unhappy, the unnatural State of the low-spirited Person. While all Nature is pleased with Life, delighted with conscious Existence, and every Creature, besides himself, is steady in Pursuit of that Species and Degree of Happiness which is suitable to its Nature, this gloomy Wretch frets at his Being, and is anxiously industrious to make it superlatively wretched. He exaggerates every natural Evil to an unsupportable Misfortune, and accumulates the Number of his real Wants by a thousand others, that are nowhere existent, but in his distempered Imagination.

This

This unnatural Deformity of the Soul, takes its Rise from a fullen, ill-natured Disposition of the Mind, is nourished by Sloth and Indolence, and gains the Force of a settled Habit, by weakening the Force of the animal Spirits, and permitting the Blood to thicken, and all the Juices to stagnate for Want of proper Exercise. When it has arrived at this State, it requires the Use of Physic, as well as the Exercise of Reason, to get the better of the fullen Malady ; but even here Resolution and Perseverance may conquer its Effects, though with Difficulty. However, when we feel the first Approaches of it on the Mind, it is then much easier to banish it our Thoughts, and it is the Interest, the Duty of every Man, that is not wedded to Wretchedness, that is not in love with Misery, to guard against its Attacks with the same Zeal and Earnestness we would against the Appearance of a Pestilence, or other malignant contagious Distemper.

WHAT strange unthinking Creatures are Men ? If our Finger aches, we are alarmed for the Body, are anxious to remove every thing that may hurt or deform the outward Man, and are easily persuaded to undergo any Regimen to restore it to its natural Strength and Vigour ; yet it requires Rhetoric, Perswasion, and Argument to guard against the Diseases of the

We are more anxious about the Deformities of the Body, than of the Soul.

Soul, and perswade them to remove those Habits and Affections, that render it miserable, wretched, and deformed. What nauseous Draughts, what bitter Potions, and tormenting Operations we undergo, to preserve a Shape, a Feature, or a worthless Limb, that our Bodies may appear delicate and uniform! yet we cannot submit patiently to the Voice of Reason, Common-Sense, or Religion, to purge and cleanse the Soul, the better, the only valuable Part of us, from the most shocking Blotches that disgrace Humanity, sour all our present Enjoyments, and deprive us of every rational Hope of future Felicity. To these unhappy Creatures that are under the Dominion of this lazy Malady, Low-Spiritedness, it may be needless to argue them out of their Fit of melancholly Madness; and what can be said, I am afraid, will have but little Influence on them, unless in their lucid Intervals of calm Reason. But it is to be presumed a brief Description of the fatal Effects, its Influence upon ourselves and Society, under the several Heads it will be treated of, may be of some Use, to those who find a Tendency in their Disposition to that sullen Habit, and may induce them to guard against its Predominancy; and I think it the more necessary to take this Pains, as this Disease is almost peculiar to, and epidemical, in this Kingdom, and so common amongst all Ranks of
 People,

People, that they seem neither alarmed at its Approaches, nor ashamed to own themselves Slaves to this base Disposition of Mind, though I am convinced, if most of its Votaries, especially the politer Sort of Mankind, who are most fond of acknowledging its Dominion, were sensible of its horrid Deformity, and the monstrous Effects it is capable of producing, that they would be as much ashamed and afraid to own that they were low-spirited, as that they had the Plague, or any other nauseous Malady.

But this dreadful Evil deserves a greater Share of our Attention, that though it has all the Consequences, and much worse than the most dreadful Disease; yet it makes its Approaches on the Mind, under no such frightful Appearances, it attacks us under the Disguise of a pleasing lazy Indolence, and steals upon us by slow and insensible Degrees, changes the Habit of the Mind so artfully, that we are not sensible of the Alteration, till it has got so strong a Footing in the Disposition, that it requires the strongest Efforts of our Reason to conquer it.

*Low Spirit-
edness steals
upon the
Mind.*

In some, this fatal Disposition is born with them, they have received the Taint from their Parents or Nurses: Their Juices are thick and milky, their animal Spirits small, in Pro-
Some are
subject to it
from their
Constitution

portion to the heavy Matter they are to move, and the Fluids flow flow and sluggishly through their Vessels, being mixed with much Phlegm and hot bilious Humours. Melancholly is natural to such a Habit of Body, and if Care is not taken by the Parents to alter the State of the Fluids as much as they can, by proper Physic, while they are Children, and great Care taken by themselves, when grown to adult Years, to guard against the Force of Habit being joined to the natural Tendency of their Constitution, they may expect the worst, the most fatal Consequence.

THIS Consideration, that the constitutional Maladies of the Parent are communicated to their Posterity, ought to make every wise Man cautious, how he strengthens the Taint in his own Disposition, by matching with a Woman labouring under any Degree of this melancholly Disorder. It is more than sufficient to make the Offspring unhappy, that one of the Parents is inclinable to Low-Spiritedness; but its Misery is inevitable, if both have the Seeds of that Disease in their Constitution. I have, within my own Memory, seen a melancholly Instance of the Neglect of this Caution: A Gentleman, naturally of a melancholly Disposition, and threatened by every Symptom of a Low-Spirited Habit, tempted by a considerable Fortune, that Bane of conjugal

An Instance
of the fatal
Effects of a
Low-Spirited
Match.

jugal Felicity, matched with a Lady, who, to a languid and melancholly Cast of Mind, flowing from Temperament, had joined all the modish Affectation of Vapours, Hippos, and Spleen, 'till Hyftericks and Low-Spiritedness had deprived her of every Relish of Life. Their melancholly Union was the Spring of a most tormenting Scene to themselves; their mutual Ailments were the only Subject of their Conversation; and they each expected from the other more Sympathy and Compassion than the Sullenness of their Tempers could afford. This begot wrangling about which of them suffered most, 'till their Debates on this very dubious Point, produced first Contempt, and then an utter Aversion on both Sides. Had the Misfortune stopped here, their Jars and Discord might justly be looked upon as a Punishment of their mercenary Nuptials; but their innocent Offspring bore the greatest Weight of the Sin of their Parents: They had six Children, all of whom lived to Man's Estate; their eldest Son, and Heir, is melancholly mad, and confined to a Mad-house not many Miles from London; their Second shot himself, on a very slight Disappointment in an Amour he had engaged in with a young Lady in his Neighbourhood; their Third is not so far gone in Melancholly as his eldest Brother, but has all the Symptoms of the same dismal State: They had
three

three Daughters, one of whom when big with Child, fell down in a violent Fit of Hyſterics, by which Fall ſhe received a Hurt that occaſioned an Abortion, and her Death in three Days after ; another married a Tradeſman of Briſtol, then in very good Circumſtances, but his Wife fell in with the Methodiſts, neglected her Shop and Family-Buſineſs, and by that, and her Bounty to the Preacher that fed her Enthuſiaſm, ſhe has found Means to reduce her Huſband to Bankruptcy, which neither her Prudence nor boaſted Piety enables her to bear with any Degree of Patience, or Moderation ; the youngeſt is ſtill unmarried, but ſo bewitched by Whitfield, and the reſt of that canting Tribe, that there is very little Hope of her making any Man happy by Marriage, or that the melancholly gloomy Cloud that occupies her whole Temper, will permit her to reliſh any true Felicity herſelf.

I mention this Family as an Inſtance, amongſt a Thouſand others, where the Miſery of Children has been owing to the ill-judged Union of their Parents, perhaps the Children of either of theſe unhappy Pair, might have been conſtitutionally Low-Spirited, had they matched ſeparately ; but I think it morally, if not phyſically certain, that if each of them had made Choice of a Partner for Life, free from the Influence of

of this dark and dismal Habit of Mind, the Offspring of both had a much better Chance to have escaped the Miseries that attended the Issue of this Marriage.

THERE are others who are not so unfortunate to be born with any Tendency to the melancholly Affection; but permit it to grow upon them by Sloth and Indolence. A Habit of Idleness and Laziness, once contracted, has all the Effects of a natural Disposition; for if the Fluids are not kept in due and constant Exercise, they naturally thicken, and become too heavy and sluggish to be moved by the animal Spirits, and these too, by Degrees, lose their Tone and active Force, and then the unhappy Patient having the Crassis of the Blood altered, Bile, Phlegm, and melancholly Humours are generated in large Quantities, and he becomes, in all Respects, in the same Situation as if he had been born in that miserable State.

Others indulge it by Sloth and Idleness.

MEN of sedantry Lives are aptest to fall into this Disposition, especially if the Change from an active, to a pensive, studious Life, is sudden, and of long Duration; and we find, accordingly, more Gown Men affected with this Disorder, than any other Set of Men; and to them it is the greatest Scandal; for as Knowledge ought

Studious and
sedantries
People most
exposed to
this Disorder.

ought to be the Motive of their Studies, it is a Demonstration, if they permit this Disease to gain upon their Constitution, that they have neglected the most useful Part of it, the Knowledge of themselves, the Passions, and the Force and Influence of Habit upon both Body and Mind. A thorough Knowledge of these, to which all Science ought to point, must inform them, that too intense an Application naturally dulls the mental Powers; that Exercise and Recreation is as necessary for the Mind as the Body; and that one Hour's Application, when the Mind is chearful, all the Faculties alert, and all our Organs in due Tone and Vigour, makes greater Progress, even in the most abstracted Branches of Literature, than a whole Month of sleepy Study, when the Body is fatigued, and the Mind stupified with too much Thought. I have known several whose Genius were equal to the most exalted Knowledge, and might have been an Honour, even to Humanity, lose themselves in a Labyrinth of Study, and grow stupid by an inordinate Itch after Knowledge. I have known Men whose Minds were stored with all the Riches of human Literature, yet by constantly poring upon Books, and neglecting Exercise and Rest, unable to taste any Felicity from their boundless Science, or to communicate one Grain of Happiness to others, out of all their Magazine of laborious Knowledge,
whose

whose Conversation was insipid, and whose old Age was soured alternately with the Gout, and the Horrors of the Hippo and Spleen. Strange Perversion of Science ! to be so much absorb'd in the Means, as to lose all Sight of the End. To what End all our unwearied Search after Knowledge ? Is it merely to know, to gape, and wonder like the Crowd, that we sit up Night and Day to investigate hidden Truths, and explore the secret Wonders of Nature ? Surely it is not : It must be to provide for our own Felicity, and to communicate Happiness to others. This must be the End of Study, and the true and rational Use of Science. How is this consistent with the Destruction of our Health, and benumbing with inordinate Application all the Powers of the Mind, with souring all our own Enjoyments, and rendering ourselves incapable of profiting others by our Knowledge and Example. For they can learn nothing from such Men, unless it is to contract an Aversion to Books and Literature ; since the only Fruits their greatest Admirers can boast of, is the Curse of Melancholly and Low-Spiritedness.

Those who permit this sullen Habit to grow upon them, in this Manner, must have very dreadful Apprehensions, since they are answerable for all its Consequences : Whereas those that are born with it have
some

some alleviating Plea ; but both are inexcusable, if when they have discerned a Disposition towards it, they do not use their utmost Efforts to check its Progress, and prevents its arriving at the last and fatal Stage of it.

Others acquire by Grief, for Losses, &c.

THERE are others that fall into this State of Mind by the Force of Disappointments, Crosses, unlucky Accidents in Life, and indulging too long a poignant Grief for some affecting Misfortune. Grief and Sorrow, if indulged, naturally produce this Low-Spiritedness, and as it attacks us under some Shew of Reason, or at least an amiable innocent Weakness, is more than any Thing else to be attended to, not only as it is a very common Excuse, and that most People, at some time or other, have Cause, as they apprehend, to indulge on this Account, this melancholly Disposition, but because of all others it makes the quickest Advances towards the worst Stage of this dark Distemper.

Grief, its Effects accounted for.

THE Effects of Grief upon the Mind is attempted to be mechanically accounted for in this Manner. We suppose, on the News of some great Loss, the Death, Agonies, or Sufferings of some near and dear Friend, that the Soul is so much shock'd, that the animal Spirits are called in great Quantities to the Censorium, which is in a
Manner

Manner overwhelmed. This produces Faintings, Swoonings, Convulsions, and even Death itself, either by a violent Hurry of the Blood to the Heart, (which, according to the Degrees, terminates either in Swoonings or immediate Death) or of the Spirits to the Brain, which ends in Convulsions, or Madness. All these Effects are produced by the Imagination, strongly moved with the mournful Object, or melancholly Relation, working upon the arterial Blood and Spirits, and disordering the whole Frame of the human Machine : But this is not Grief, but the first Step towards it ; for either the Soul, by the Force of Reflection, rouses from the Shock, and disperses the crowded Spirits to their proper Stations and Channels, or the Physician, by proper Revulsions, directs and assists them in resuming their former Place and Tone. But they cannot recover their former Course so quickly. They return by the common Laws of their own Gravity, and the Mechanism of the Vessels, through which they are to pass without any Violence ; whereas they were protruded into their present State by a foreign and superior Force, that increased the Velocity of their Egress beyond that of their Regress, in a very great Degree. But least the Brain or Heart should suffer by the slow Retreat of the Blood and Spirits, on such Occasions, Nature, indulgent to our Wants, has provided

vided Flood-gates, opened, to detach Part of them by the Canals of the Eyes, and has taught us to accelerate their Motion by Sighs, Groans, and Cries, till the Soul is relieved from its former Agonies and Pressure. The Mind from these Recourses finds Relief from Pain, which is the only Idea we have of Pleasure, and must feel Satisfaction in them, and consequently indulge them as long as the Idea of the Object that gave it Pain remains upon the Mind. As that Impression wears off, the Humours take their wonted Channel, and our Sorrows cease; but it often happens, which is the Reason of my entering thus far into the Nature of Grief, that the first Impressions of Sorrow have been so strong, that the Soul assumes Grief for a Habit, and the Spirits and Blood have been so long accustomed to flow in that dark Channel, that they take up their Station there, and being assisted by a more plentiful Secretion of heavy Humours, the Crassis of the Blood is quite altered, the animal Spirits are less in Quantity, and less active in their Motion, a sullen Gloom occupies the whole Man, and becomes his natural Disposition.

INSTANCES of this Sort are almost innumerable, and as the Temptation is strong, and we are guided by a Sort of Impulse to grieve for Losses, that either affect us or our Friends, we ought to arm ourselves
against

against it with the greatest Resolution, and, if possible, to keep our Minds in a kind of Equilibrio, as to all earthly Enjoyments. The Fruitlessness of our Sorrow, for Events that we could not foresee, or, if foreseen, that we could not prevent, is an Argument, that, though abundantly reasonable, has very seldom any Weight, when we are in the Paroxysm of Woe, nor, perhaps, will Arguments, drawn from the Consequences that may attend indulging this Habit, be of greater Force, if offered in the first Moments of our Anguish ; but when that is a little abated, sure the fatal Example of the Misery and Despair that an unreasonable Grief has brought upon others, in like Circumstances, ought to awaken our Attention, and draw us from the melancholly Scene. And with such as do not actually feel these affecting Losses, it ought to put them upon arming their Minds against such Shocks, that they may be able to bear the Calamities, to which all Mortals are exposed, with Firmness and Temper, and prevent their suffering much greater Misery, as the Consequence of their inordinate grieving, than those very Wants that first gave Birth to their Grief ; which is a Thing that very often happens, as a particular Method in the Dispensation of Providence to humble our proud Hearts, and teach us to bear patiently our present Sufferings, as long as it is possible for us to have more and greater

An Instance
of the Ef-
fects of ill-
judged Sor-
row,

Cause of Grief. Had an unhappy Tradesman who lived some Years ago in great Prosperity, not far from Bow-Church, allowed his Mind to have been early impress'd with this Thought, that Man can live under the Pressure of no Calamity, but what it has been the Lot of others to suffer, and is in the Power of the sovereign Dispenser of all Things to accumulate with yet greater Woes, he might have still, for any thing we know to the contrary, been flourishing in Wealth and Ease, and his now starving Offspring in Prosperity and Affluence.

THIS unhappy Man was blessed with great Success in Trade, happy in his Friends and Family, but he justly placed his superior Felicity in the tender Endearments and Conversation of an affectionate Wife: Their conjugal Union was blessed with a numerous Issue of promising Children, that promised their happy Parents a Continuance of that Scene of Happiness to latest Posterity. In the Midst of this Flow of Temporal Felicity, the Wife was taken off by a malignant Fever in a few Days; the unhappy Husband felt the first Shock of Fortune, as if all Nature had been inverted, and nothing less than the Dissolution of the Universe had been to follow the Death of his Wife: His Grief was heightened by the Manner he received the News of her Death,

for

for he had been absent when she was taken ill, and heard nothing of his Misfortune, 'till on his Return he entered her Chamber, and saw her a Corpse, having but just expired. This unexpected Sight, instead of the fond Endearments he expected, and always met with, on his Return from his little Journey, deprived him for some Moments of all Signs of Life; and when, by the Force of Medicine, he was brought to himself, how melancholly his Wailings, and how poignant his Sorrow? He thought it impossible that any thing more cruel could happen to him, or his Family, and by indulging the despairing Thought, he soon grew melancholly mad, was obliged to be confined to his Apartment, as utterly incapable of all Manner of Business. Thus his Children were deprived of both their Parents at once, and the Wealth their Father's Industry had already provided for them, was quickly taken out of Trade, and squandered by a worthless Uncle, who had taken upon him the Guardianship of the Orphan-family. Their Means gone, some of them are reduced to live upon the Parish, and the rest that are grown up to earn their Bread in the most servile Offices of Life, though their younger Hopes were justly raised to as much Affluence as any Tradesmen's Children in this flourishing Metropolis. As to the sudden Effect, the Sight of a much-deserving and much-loved

dead Wife, might have upon the Mind, that the unhappy Husband was not accountable for ; but when he became so much Master of himself, as to make Use of Reflection, his Error was, in not observing that Providence, though she had chastised him, by robbing him of this Idol of his Soul, yet had not left him without many Comforts, to which infinite Numbers of his Neighbours were Strangers. Religion, as well as Reason, and a prudent Regard for his Infant-children, ought to have roused him from this Sorrow, and enduced him to guard against the Havock, that a Continuance in that State made in his Mind and Family.

WHEN such Losses afflict us, it requires our utmost Efforts to support the Mind in Steadiness and Tranquility ; but as all Men are exposed to Crosses ; as Disappointments, Losses, and Vexations, are the Lot of all the Sons of Men, next to a religious Dependance on, and frequent Recourse to divine Providence, there is no better Preservation against the Influence of Sorrow on the Mind, than to accustom it frequently to ruminate on Misfortunes, and to be in a Kind of constant Expectation of the Worst that may happen ; and for this Reason to moderate our Affections, and keep our Esteem for every temporal Concern within due Bounds ; for though our Enjoyments are never equal
to

to our Hopes, yet our Sorrow and Vexation for Losses, and Disappointments, bears an exact Proportion to the Value we put on the Possession of any thing.

WHETHER this mental Malady is natural to our Disposition, acquired by a lazy Indulgence, or assumed, as the Consequence and Effect of an unreasonable Sorrow, its Progress and Advances upon the Mind are generally the same, differing only in Quickness and Degree, according to the Heat or Crassis of the Blood. When it has gained its first Ascendancy, we find ourselves attacked by

Its Progress
generally
the same.

A certain Restlessness, and great Anxiety of Mind.

Its first Con-
sequence
Restlessness,
and Anxiety.

WE are puzzled and perplexed in our Understandings, our Ideas and Conceptions of things are confused, our Conclusions uncertain, and our Resolves fluctuating; we are uneasy we know not why, and anxious about we know not what; every thing about us seems out of Order, nothing happens as we would have it, and yet for our Souls we cannot assign a Reason for our Distaste, or give any rational Account of our Disgust; we are sad, heavy, restless, and dissatisfied, without any Cause visible to others, or any Motive that ought to have any Weight with ourselves. Grave

Company augments our Spleen, but good Humour gives a horrible Uneasiness; we are mad to find any thing in the Creation bear the Face of Mirth, Chearfulness, or Jollity. The Weather should seem clouded, the Sun should shrowd himself behind a Cloud, and all Nature in Complaisance to our Spleen ought to wear a Face of Sorrow and Sadness; yet if they do, we fret at the dull Scene, wish it changed for something else, to which our lazy Imagination has as yet assigned no Form or Shape. We fly into Company for Relief, but find no Comfort there; we seek Peace in Solitude, but there the dark Phantoms of our sickly Fancy haunt our Imagination, and make it worse than the worst of Company. In short, we must, to be easy, fly from ourselves; for wherever we go, we carry about in our Bosom the Poison that burns us, and hugs internally the Viper that preys upon our Vitals.

Leonora's
Case.

How chearful, how gay, and entertaining, was the charming Leonora, before her late Indisposition, and the Laziness indulged, during her aguish Disorder, threw her into Vapours and Spleen, which she thought so fashionable, and added so many new Charms to her Beauty, that she indulged the indolent Foible, 'till she is become a Burthen to herself, and the Jest of all about her; yet, though in every thing else she has

has Abundance of Wit and Judgment, she has not the Sense to discern the ridiculous Figure she makes in the Eyes of her Acquaintance, and that even the Apothecary, who is getting rich with her Folly, can with Difficulty forbear laughing in her Face, while she is endeavouring to describe the indescribable Pain she feels, she knows not where: And though he has hinted to her, that all that is necessary to be well, is, that she should resolve upon it, and that Exercise is better than all the Drugs in his Shop, yet she won't understand her own Interest, nor has Resolution enough to free herself from the lazy Malady.

THIS is but the first Step, before the Disease is yet formed into Shape; but when we have for some Time tortured ourselves, without being able to guess at the Source of our Disquiet, we look about us, and are glad to catch at any Excuse, at any Subject to feed and exercise our Spleen, our Neighbours feels the first Brunt: We find ourselves seized with

An unaccountable Dissatisfaction at the Happiness of others,

Disgust at
the Happi-
ness of o-
thers;

AS we find Peace, Comfort, and Happiness fled from our own Bosoms, our Hearts now replete with black, envious Juices, repines at the Felicity of others. We would

have every Body, nay all Mankind, as miserable as ourselves, and are at Variance with every Person that does not confess the same wretched State of Mind. If we see our Neighbour in Health we wish him sick, we fancy the Chearfulness of his Countenance is an Affront to our Spleen, and we would be rejoiced, if any thing could give Joy to our gloomy Mind, to see him in the Agonies of Death, or suffering the Torture of the Rack. If he is prosperous in the World, our Chagrin knows no Bounds, we hunt about with ingenious Malice to lessen his Reputation, sully his Character, and do all in our Power to sour his Quiet and disturb his Peace, that we may afford him Grounds to be as wretched, as miserable, and discontented as ourselves.

Character of
Euphæmia
and Char-
lotte.

WHAT Havock in the most tender Bonds of Friendship! What Devastation in the Peace of private Families, has not this ill-natured Disposition produced! The Friendship, and soft Amity, between Euphæmia and Charlotte, was the Subject of every one's Admiration in the Neighbourhood, and united, in one common Bond of social Union, all their Kindred, Relations, and Acquaintance; but how dismal the Reverse, when this sullen Dæmon of Vapours, and Low-Spiritedness, first sowed the Seeds of Discord between this amiable Pair. Char-
lotte

lotte in a Visit she made to a Court-bred Lady, lately settled within a few Miles of her Brother's Seat, saw so many Charms in the affected Dishabille, in the vaporish Languor of her Eye, and such commanding Respect in the indolent Grandeur of this Lady's feigned Illness, that poor Charlotte became ashamed of being in Health, and took an intolerable Pique at her lovely Friend Euphæmia, who would, out of pure Good-nature, have rallied her out of her fashionable Foible. Euphæmia attributed the splenetic Behaviour of her Friend to some Part of the necessary Ceremonial of this assumed Malady, and could not persuade herself, that any Circumstance in Life could ruffle the tender Friendship they had entertained for each other, she dropped turning her Friend's Illness into Ridicule, and gave a patient Hearing to all her whimsical Complaints; but as she was naturally chearful, she could not, for her Life, enter so much into Charlotte's imaginary Illness, as to check the natural Gaiety and Good-humour of her own Conversation. This Charlotte called want of Sympathy, insulting her Illness, and, from being piqued, conceived an utter Aversion to Euphæmia, and took the hellish Resolution to do something that should spoil that Lady's chearful Disposition, and render her as much moped and unhappy as herself. As in their former Friendship they had kept no

Reserve,

Reserve, so Charlotte was Mistress of some Secrets, which she maliciously blabbed, and sowed Discord between her and her nearest Relations. She did not stop here, but by a forged Tale, whispered to Euphæmia's Brother, a Quarrel ensued between him and a young gentleman of great Merit, who was in a Manner contracted to the now unhappy Euphæmia, in which they were both mortally wounded, and both died within a few Days, having first learned that the Grounds of their Dispute had no other Foundation but Charlotte's Spleen and Malice at the chearful Happiness of her Friend Euphæmia, who had now real Cause of Sorrow, with which she allowed herself to be so much affected, that Excess of Grief threw her into a lingering Consumption, of which she died in about eighteen Months.

WHAT a fiend-like Spirit is this! that can neither relish Happiness itself, nor have any Taste of Satisfaction, but what results from the Misery of others? And yet this is the second Stage of the low-spirited Man. There is no Man, however, so little attacked with this dismal Disease, but more or less, in Proportion to the Ascendancy it has got over his Mind, finds himself repining, displeased, and dissatisfied with the Happiness of others, and, if indulged, he may be assured, as much as he can depend
upon

upon the Union of natural Causes and Effects, that, at last, however Good-naturedly disposed he may have been formerly, he becomes malicious, envious, and spiteful to the highest Degree. How much more than a Pest is this Disposition to be shunned ?

In the End
grows en-
vious and ma-
licious.

As the sullen, fulky, low-spirited Man, is constantly in quest of new Subjects to torment himself, and as Objects multiply in Proportion as the Disease advances towards it Height, so now his Neighbours are not often enough happy to furnish Matter for his Spleen and Malice; but he is contented, in these Intervals, to find new Cause of Chagrin at Home: All of a sudden, he is, though otherwise in a perfect State of Health, assaulted by a whole Possé

Of imaginary Ailments of Body.

Imaginary
Ailments.

I call these imaginary Ailments, not that the unhappy Patient does not feel excruciating Pain; I believe they do, and suffer more when the Distemper has arrived at this Stage, than others do in the most racking Fits of the Gout and Stone; but it is all the Work of powerful, melancholly Imagination, working upon the Blood and Spirits, and producing these strange Effects: If the unhappy Sufferer has much Bile and black Humour in his Constitution, he falls
into

into the most deplorable Species of a Delirium, that of melancholly Madness. If these Humours are in less Quantity, but the Juices fizy and slow in their Motion, he falls into a more ridiculous Phrenzy; he fancies a thousand Absurdities, that though they frequently create us Mirth, as when Pope says,

“ Men prove with Child, as powerful
 “ Fancy works,
 “ And Maids turn’d Bottles, call aloud
 “ for Corks.”

Yet they really merit our greatest Compassion; for they actually feel all they imagine, with a thousand Horrors and Anxieties that haunt their Minds, to which our Language can afford no Name. The Imagination not only fixes real torturing Pain in all their Limbs, and gives Birth to innumerable Diseases, known, felt, and understood, only by themselves; but under all these Complaints, their Discontent of Mind, their anxious, hopeless, soul-terrifying Fears accumulate the dreadful Weight of their Anguish beyond mortal Apprehension. What a dreadful Thing it is to feel all the Tortures of the Rack, to be in dreadful Expectation of the most dismal Dissolution? A Dissolution! without one Glimpse of Hope, one Dawn of Joy, or one chearful Ray of Comfort, to light them
 through

through the dark, the horrible Region of Death, whose gloomy Terrors their sick Fancy has exaggerated beyond all Description, and is constantly present to their ever wakeful Imagination. The Horrors of this State are too violent to last, they are seized by periodical Fits, and in the Intervals their Understanding is so bewildered, and their mental Powers and Faculties so weakened, that they can find no Comfort in calm Reason, or any Peace from the Exercise of Reflection. Religion to such Minds is generally their favourite Theme, but from it they can draw no Balm to heal their wounded Soul. Its chearful Influence on all the Rest of the Sons of Men, is lost upon, and an utter Stranger to, their unsettled Minds; for now they are perplexed

*With Doubts, Scruples, and Unsettledness
in religious Principles.*

Doubts and
Scruples in
Religion.

RELIGION is so natural to the Mind of Man, that however its Dictates may be smothered for some time in Sense and Appetite, yet, in Time of Adversity, when the Soul is oppressed with Care, and the Body with Torments, we fly to that as an Asylum, as a Place of Refuge, a sure and never-failing Antidote against all the Mischiefs and Misfortunes that can happen to us: And a Man of sound Reason and Understanding,

Receives no
Comfort in
Religion.

derstanding, impressed with the Notions of a rational Religion, must find it there, or no where else. But, alas ! the low-spirited Man cannot possibly find this Comfort from it : He flies, it is true, like others, to Religion ; but it is to a Religion framed according to the prevailing Capricio's of his distempered Imagination ; it is not the Religion of Nature ; that would speak Peace to his Soul, and calm his reasonable Apprehensions ; but it is the Religion of an Enthusiast, the Dreams, the Reveries of a Madman, he has dressed up in all the Pomp and outward Shew of reasonable Worship and Adoration. But he is not happy even in a Religion of his own making, of his own chusing, but tossed about by every Wind of Doctrine, catches like a sinking Man at every Straw, and makes the Tour of all the absurd Doctrines that have been thought of in all Ages, by his Brethren Fools and Mad-men : He is zealous, nay a Bigot, for the Moment the Whim takes him to believe any Doctrine, and would make all about him believe he had at last hit upon the right Way, and there dropped his Sheet-anchor ; but the next Wind makes Ship-wreck of his Reason and Resolution, and he veers about to another Point of the Compass, diametrically opposite to that he was lately so fond of. Every possible Doubt staggers his Faith, and puzzles his Understanding ; he expects

Demon-

Demonstration in every Thing, but is so unhappy as to be blind and deaf to its Influence, when he hears it.

To this unhappy Disposition may be ascribed the ridiculous Figure a certain Rev. Clergyman makes in Life : He has Learning sufficient to give Lustre and Advantage to his natural Genius; which, in his younger Days, was observed to be such, as gave his Friends just Reason to hope that he would be an Honour to his Family, and to the Seminary where he studied; but as he had naturally a good deal of Melancholly in his Constitution, so his close Application to Study, without due Exercise, sunk his Spirits into a miserable State of Languor, and grew upon him so much in a few Years, that his Intellects seemed to be impaired: He disputed himself first out of the Religion he had been educated in, and in the Defence of which he had frequently drawn his Pen; and from thence travelled through all the Errors, Schisms, and Absurdities, with which this Island, to its great Scandal, abounds. As he has finished the Tour of all the Sects that pretend any Dependance on Scripture and Revelation, so after stopping a little at the Mad-house of Scepticism, he has at last taken up his Dwelling with Deism, and become a powerful Advocate for every Thing that can bring the Scripture and Christianity

Character of
a wandering
Clergyman.

Christianity into Contempt and Ridicule; however, if I can judge of the Man, I have some Hopes that the melancholly Humours may bring him once more back to Reason, and the true Religion that can alone give Comfort to his wandering Soul.

THIS Unsettledness in religious Principles, at last subsides into unreasonable Fears about his future State, and, in the End, begets that worst of all Fears, a Fear, the most opposite to Religion and common Sense, viz.

Slavish Fear.

A slavish Fear.

UNDER this Head may be comprehended not only a slavish Fear in religious Matters, which is the worst and most dangerous Species of Fear, but that scandalous Habit, commonly called Cowardice, which is the constant, the genuine Effect of Low-Spiritedness.

Low-spiritedness naturally begets Cowardice.

WHEN Captain Modish rubs his Forehead, and with an affected apish Grin, cries out, “ Bless my Soul, my Spirits are quite sunk, I’m confoundedly low-spirited to Day;” the silly Creature has not Sense to reflect upon the Import of the Confession he has made; he cannot for the Soul of him comprehend, that he has owned neither more or less, than that he is,

is, at least for the present Time, a rank constitutional Coward, and that, in the present Disposition of Mind, he would be as much afraid of a drawn Sword, as his Mother was in the last Month of her Pregnancy of him. What a charming Recommendation this would be to the Esteem of Mankind, were it generally understood in this Sense? And yet such a Declaration, if it has any Meaning, or any Truth in it, can be understood in no other Sense, without the greatest Rape upon Words, that possibly can be imagined.

A MAN of true rational Courage can never be low-spirited, nor is it possible to exercise it in that Disposition. In every Act of Courage, the Soul, the reasoning Faculty, and all the mental Powers, must be full awake. They must be under no Stupor, or lazy, languid Habit; but the Mind, collected in itself, must be capable of judging the Nature and Degree of the approaching Danger; and the Reason and Judgment ready and capable to determine the proper Means of Defence, and all the Faculties alert to take their Part in the Enterprize. But the low-spirited Creature, on the least Appearance of Danger, is all in a Flutter, Reason bewildered, the Soul, and all its Faculties, as only half awake, can judge of nothing really as it is; but frightened out of its Wits, sculks meanly

D behind

The Nature
of Courage.

behind the first Shelter it can meet with, without being able to use the least Means for its Defence and Preservation. In a Word, the Soul is taken at an unawares, is off its Guard, is utterly incapable to collect its Strength, and turns out that odious, disgraceful Thing, called a Coward, and by this Disposition being frequently indulged, it gathers the Force of a settled Habit, which it's not in the Power of Reason to conquer.

It is to be hoped, that however modish it may be esteemed to be low-spirited, that when the true Import of the Phrase, and the real Effect of the Habit is thus explained, to be meer Cowardice, it will be needless to use more Arguments with the fine Gentlemen of the present Age, to lay aside this modern Malady, this Disease so little known to our brave Ancestors, and that a Man of Sense will be as much ashamed to own himself a Slave to that base Disposition, as he would to run from his Colours in the Day of Battle, or desert his Friend in the Time of Danger.

The Ladies
Claim to
Cowardice
examined.

BUT I am afraid, I shall have greater Difficulty to perswade the Fair Sex, that the natural Tendency of this Disposition to beget and confirm that hated Character, called a Coward, is a proper Argument to induce them to be ashamed of being low-spirited;

spirited; since amongst our other Refinements from the Manners and Customs of our old, unfashionable Grandmothers, we have laid it down as a Maxim amongst the Ladies, that Fear is the Characteristic of the Sex, and Cowardice the natural Birth-right of a Woman, insomuch, that if it is the Misfortune of a fine Lady to be born with but one Degree more of Courage than a hunted Hair, she is ashamed of the masculine Disposition, conceals it as much as she would a Pimple on her Forehead, and, though in no Measure afraid, affects to be frightened, even at her own Shadow, and would no more touch a drawn Sword, though in the harmless Hands of her Sweet-heart, than she would a Snake, or some other venomous Instrument of Death, and affects these Airs so long, and so often, that what she at first feigned as a fashionable Foible, becomes a real Habit of the Soul, to the great Plague of themselves, and all about them.

THIS Claim to Fear, which the Ladies have set up, is rendered so sacred by venerable Custom, that I am persuaded, that I shall be looked upon as a very paradoxical, impertinent Fellow, when I take upon me to assert, and shall attempt to prove, that Cowardice is as unnatural, almost as scandalous, and, in some Cases, much more dangerous in its Consequences in Women,

than in Men; and, of course, as it is a manifest Blemish in the fairest Part of the Creation, all Lovers of that beautiful Sex ought to join in rescuing them from the Slavery of that base Passion, and all Women that love themselves, and hate a Coward, as I think they all generally do, ought to exert their Reason to get rid of that Weakness, and to guard against every Habit that may beget, strengthen, or confirm that unnatural Disposition, which is certainly criminal in a great Degree, if by our own Indolence, or Whim, we allow it to grow upon us; and of Consequence, that, as it has been demonstrated in the Beginning of this Section, that Low-Spiritedness is naturally productive of this slavish Habit, every Woman ought to shun and be ashamed of it, as she would old Age, the Small-Pox, or Ugliness.

They must
acknow-
ledge them-
selves Fools,
or renounce
unreason-
able Fears,

THE greatest Advocates for Cowardice in the Fair Sex, will allow, that it is impossible for a Man of Sense to be a Coward; for supposing him constitutionally timorous, his Reason and Judgment must, in Time, confirm his Temper, and render him rationally brave. For Courage is no more than the Act of a Mind collected in itself, exerting its Reason in discerning the Circumstance of Things, the Degree of Danger, &c. and possessed of a just Notion of its own Powers to defend itself. If its
Powers

Powers are equal to the Danger, it boldly exerts them, and repels Force by Force; but, if unequal, it takes the first Opportunity to shun the Encounter, and makes a prudent Retreat, without any Imputation of Cowardice. Cowardice is just the Reverse of this; a Person that has not Sense to judge of the Circumstance of Things, or to form any just Notion of its own Powers and Faculties, but runs sneakingly away on every Appearance of real or fancied Danger, what is this but absolute Folly? It is the true Definition of a Fool. Who then amongst the Admirers of the Fair can be so ill-manner'd, so clownishly rude, to say, that that beautiful Sex are born Fools, and that Folly is natural to them as Women. Were any of the fine Gentlemen, who humours his Mistress when she squalls at a Gust of Wind in crossing the Thames to Vaux-hall, or screams out at the Jolting of a Coach going to Ranelagh, to tell her, that she owed that Indulgence to her being a mere Ideot, and that he bore with the impertinent Foible of her affected Fears, because she was really void of Sense, I apprehend the delicate Lady would find Courage enough to return the ugly Compliment with a Blow on the Beau's Ear; which would show that when she is free from the Impression of her having a Right to be in a Pannic without Reason, that she

has naturally Courage enough to exert the little Strength she has.

Their
Weakness
is no Plea
for Cowar-
dice.

It is falsely urged that the Weakness and the Delicacy of the Sex take from them the Reproach of Cowardice, since Strength is not a necessary Ingredient in rational Courage. A Cock has as much Courage as a Lion, though not endued with one Thousandth Degree of his Strength; but the Creature, I mean a Cock has Courage to exert the Powers it is possessed of, and to engage any thing it judges itself Master of. Courage has nothing to do with Strength, it is a rational Act of the Mind, exerting its natural Faculties to their proper Uses; and in this Sense, a Woman must have Courage in Proportion to her Degree of Sense, and as often as she renounces that Character, acknowledges herself a Fool: Her Weakness gives her a Right, without the Imputation of Cowardice, to run away from a Force superior to her's; but her Plea of Weakness of Body has no Weight in establishing imaginary Fears, in creating Danger where a Child can see none; and as nothing, but the Weakness of her Understanding, can justify it, methinks they ought not to be so very fond of the Character of Fool, as to lay claim to it almost on every Occasion. Men must admit, and the Ladies would be very angry if they did not admit, that on all other Occasions they

they betray a Genius equal to ours, if cultivated with the same Care. In the Name of Wonder, why then ought they not to avail themselves of that boasted Reason, at least so far as to get rid of imaginary Fears, and the affected Cowardice so much in Vogue in this delicate Age; and with what Reason can they pretend to despise Cowardice in us, when they are so much in love with the unnatural Monster in themselves?

If we take a View of Nature, before Art, Luxury, and Folly, has refined away its natural Powers, we shall find, that Women are not naturally such timid, dastardly Animals, as they are at present. Amongst the Indians in America, the Women have Courage almost equal to the Men, being not only utter Strangers to all the weak Foibles of causeless Fears, but can face real Danger, and defend themselves with all the Strength they have. This is pure Nature, and to judge of its real State, we must trace her to such Climates, remote from modern Improvements, that instead of embellishing her, have robbed her of some of her most valuable Beauties. This leads me to an Observation, on which I would found an Argument, that I hope will have considerable Weight with my Female Readers. It is this: That from all Knowledge of the World, and all Remarks upon ancient and modern History, I have always

Women are
not naturally
timorous.

observed

Where the
Women are
timorous,
the Men are
Cowards
and Slaves,
& vice versa.

observed a just Proportion between the Courage of the Men and Women of all Nations, that have made any Figure in the World. I would be understood to mean, that at whatever Time or Period, or in whatever Place, the Women have been remarkably timorous in their Disposition, that then it might be remarked, that the Men were Slaves, and remarkably cowardly : And, on the contrary, that where the Women have dared to be brave, and have been ashamed to be Slaves to Fear, that the Men, in such Places, and in such Periods, have been remarkable for heroic Courage, and the most exalted Principles of Liberty.

THIS is an unwilling, and a very disagreeable Remark upon the present Age ; since every Man's Experience must convince him, that there never was a Period of Time, wherein the Women showed so much of this base, timid Disposition : I wish I could be convinced, that the cowardly Habit has not made an equal Progress on the Minds of the greatest Part of the other Sex. To confirm this Observation we need not have Recourse to antient History, though the brightest Periods in ancient History are full of Instances of the Steadiness of Mind, and the heroic Courage of their Women in Time of imminent Danger ; modern History is full of Examples, that wherever the Women have been brave, the
Men

Men have been free. The Swedes made the greatest Figure of any Nation in Europe in the last Age, and amongst them it is well known, that the Ladies were so far from putting in their Claim to constitutional Cowardice, that Numbers of them concealed their Sex, and followed their glorious King, and his little Army of Heroes, through all the Dangers and Fatigues of War. Amongst the Nations now in Europe, remarkable for military Virtue, the same Spirit is to be traced amongst their Women; the Ladies of Switzerland dare look upon a Sword without falling into a Swoon, and handle a Musket without Fits of the Mother. If they could not, they could not bring forth a Nation that make War a Trade, and look upon Courage as a rich Inheritance, that furnishes them with a Livelihood at the Expence of their more effeminate Neighbours, who dare not trust themselves with the Guardianship of their Liberty.

THOSE who have travelled into the mountainous Parts of the Isle of Britain, where Luxury and Effeminacy have not spread their baneful Taint upon the Minds and Morals of the People, find a Degree of Courage amongst the Females of those Parts, that would reflect Shame upon many of the Males of a more refined southern Climate. Amongst the Highlanders it is reckoned

Custom
amongst the
Highlanders

reckoned a Reproach to a Woman, that cannot stand the Report of a Gun without starting, or handle a drawn Sword without trembling, insomuch that if by Accident a Sword is drawn in Company where Women are, especially Women with Child, the Man who draws it, before he puts it up, strikes gently the Head of every Woman present. Were he to neglect this Ceremony, he would be reckoned horribly impolite, and the Reason given for it is, that touching thus a pregnant Woman, hinders the Child from being a Coward. If this Doctrine were universally true, how many Cowards would we have in England, since there is not a Mother in ten thousand, but would faint under the bold Ceremony; but these Women bring forth no Cowards, or, if they do, it is not the Mother's Fault, who is ashamed of nothing so much as betraying Fear while she is pregnant, since nothing can be a greater Reproach to her, than being Mother to a Coward.

THOUGH the Manners of a barbarous People are not to be imitated in every Respect, by a polite Age, yet where their Customs are founded in Nature, and consonant to sound Reason, it would be Barbarism not to adopt them; and, I believe, on Examination, we shall find a great deal of Reason and prudent Policy, (that is, in a State where Courage is not reckoned a Crime)

Crime) in thus banishing unreasonable Fears, and a Love of Cowardice from the Fair Sex ; for it is a physical Truth, as evident as the Sun, that the Mother must necessarily communicate to her Child, whatever Habits and Affections are predominant in her Disposition, at the Time of her Conception and Pregnancy. If Fear, Cowardice, and Low-Spiritedness are prevailing Habits, it must be a real Miracle if the Child is not a constitutional Coward ; ought not this Consideration to alarm all the fine Ladies, who either are, hope, or wish to be Mothers, and they must be wretched indeed who do not. What a miserable Shock to their Pride to have their Child branded for a rascally Coward, and their Memory infamous, by being Mother to a Wretch despised by, and the Out-cast of, all Mankind ; and yet this they must be, if they indulge the Hippo, the Spleen, the Vapours, or Low-Spiritedness, or yield themselves Slaves to that base-born Passion, Fear, in whatever Shape it assaults them.

Would my fair Readers be thought Admirers of Courage in the Men ; would they be thought wise, to have Wit and Common Sense ; would they desire to see their Country happy at Home, glorious Abroad, and their Enemies humbled ; would they desire to be Wives to the Brave, or do they wish for the Blessing of all Blessings,
being

being the happy Mothers of a Race of Patriot-heroes ; in a word, would they court the Character of a British Lady, let them be ashamed of every vain Fear ; let them shake off their unnatural, affected Cowardice, and every Habit that has a Tendency that Way ; let them dare to be brave, and the Men will and must be ashamed of so mean an Affectation, as that of Low-Spiritedness, that is productive of so base a Habit as that of Cowardice.

Of a religious
flavish
Fear.

I HAVE hitherto treated Low-Spiritedness, as productive only of that Species of slavish Fear, commonly called Cowardice, I come now to explain its Effects upon our religious Fears, and the dangerous Consequences of it on our Minds, as Christians and Creatures actuated by a Sense of Religion and Devotion.

Its Consequences, as affecting our natural Courage, are odious to ourselves, and dangerous to Society, yet its Effects are only temporal ; but in the Light we are now to consider it, it strikes at our Hopes of future Happiness, and darkens every Gleam of Hope we have of eternal Felicity.

It is impossible for any Man to be truly or rationally religious, without a just and adequate Notion of the Deity ; that being the Basis, the first Principle of all Religion,

gion, both natural and revealed : But this Knowledge of the Supream Being, and our Relation to him, as his Creatures, it is impossible for the low-spirited Man to attain. His gloomy, melancholly Apprehension paints him with Attributes unknown to the God-head, and states himself in a Relation that augments his Horror, and makes him shudder at the dreadful Prospect his sickly Fancy has represented to his heated Imagination.

HE owns himself the Creature, but it is the Creature of mere Power, and not the Child of infinite Goodness, and superlative Benevolence ; he believes in the Supream Being, not as a Father, as the Author of his Being, for his own Happiness, but as an inexorable, unmerciful, and implacable Deity, ready to execute the most dreadful Vengeance upon every natural Failing of his Creatures. What a monstrous Picture is this, of a Being that expects Worship and Adoration ! And yet this is the Idol the low-spirited melancholly Man adores ; his Fears multiplies his Offences, and his gloomy Imagination has stripped the Author of his Existence of every amiable Attribute that forms the God-head. The offended Judge is ever present to his Eye, and he dares not turn his Mind to his most amiable, his most adorable Attributes, his Mercy, his Goodness, and Beneficence to the

Of a false
Notion of
the Deity.

Works

Works of his Hands, whom he has created for their Happiness, and not to torture them with a miserable Existence, merely to exercise his Power, or gratify his avenging Justice.

WE are to fear the Almighty, not with a slavish, but a filial Fear; a Fear to offend against his Laws, a Fear to offend against Virtue, because Sin is detestable in itself, and not merely because we dread the Punishment his Justice exacts, or his Power is capable of inflicting, for such is the Fear of Devils. They know, fear, and tremble, without abating one Ace of their Wickedness, lightening their Pains, or advancing one Step nearer Felicity. When we represent the Deity to our Mind, in this dreadful Manner, vested only with Power and Vengeance, we strip him of all Right to our Adoration, or Worship; for mere Power, divested of Goodness and Beneficence, is not, nor cannot, to rational Creatures, appear the Object of Worship. It is not because the Supream Being created us, because he has it in his Power to punish, or speak us into Nothing, that gives him a Right to our rational Worship; but because he bestowed upon us a Being capable of Felicity, and from a Motive of Beneficence, not meer arbitrary Power, endued us with Powers and Faculties capable, if not wantonly or maliciously perverted,

of

Mere Power
no Object of
rational
Worship.

of attaining to every Degree of Happiness, our Nature is capable of. This is the Foundation of the Worship due from rational Creatures to a real Divinity. What Pretence here, what Cause for that slavish Dread, that gloomy Horror that scares the low-spirited Man, as often as he looks up to his Creator? That Man who worships a Being necessarily Good, Wise, Omnipotent, Merciful, and Beneficent, a Being who created his Creatures only to make them happy, who sees, knows, and bears with their Weaknesses, their natural and necessary Infirmities, may look up to his heavenly Father with a chearful Heart, may ensure himself of his Peace, his Protection, and that Portion of Happiness he has promised to the Just: He sees his Justice shrowded with Mercy, and merited Vengeance stayed by Love and Benevolence; and his grateful Heart, warmed with his Goodness, joins the heavenly Choir in singing Glory and Honour to the most High, to that Being whose Throne is founded on Mercy, and whose Voice is Peace and Happiness to all the Works of his Hands. But the low-spirited Man, tortured with Dreams and horrid Visions of a distempered Imagination, like Moses on the Mount, is unable to bear the Glory of the divine Majesty in this amiable Attitude, cloathed with Mercy and Goodness, dares not look his God in the Face, but
delights

delights and feasts his melancholly Fancy with his back Parts, or, if I may use the Expression, the dark, the dismal Side of the Divinity. The Consequences of this slavish Fear, begot on a melancholly Brain, and founded on wrong and mean Conceptions of the Deity, are

Weak and
idle Appre-
hensions.

Weak and idle Apprehensions.

A MAN of this low-spirited Disposition, thus impressed with the Notion of an angry and incensed Deity, creates to himself a thousand Subjects of Uneasiness; he is frightened with Dreams, Omens, and all the melancholly Tales of the Nursery. The meanest Trifles serve to alarm his gloomy Fancy, to augment his Fears, and dash his Hopes of Peace and Happiness. Does the Fumes of Indigestion, or any natural Indisposition of the Body disturb his Rest, or a Vision less chearful than ordinary arise to his sleeping Fancy, he presently concludes some Evil at Hand, some Dæmon ready to destroy his Quiet, or some impending Judgment ready to burst upon his Head. Does a Candle burn blew, a Cat or a Hare cross him in the Highway, a Woman, or a Crow, meet him in the Morning, he loses all Taste of present Enjoyment with Fear of future Ills, gathered from these strange and unnatural Portents. He is ingenious in tormenting himself, and rather

rather than want an Opportunity of indulging his forboding Tears, he establishes to himself a Rule of explaining these silly Observations, that put it out of his Power to meet with a lucky Omen, or a chearful Dream; for if the Letter of his Oracle bespeaks him Bad, he explains it literally, if Good, he unriddles it by the Rule of Contrary, so that there is not a Folly of the Imagination, whether sleeping or waking, or any the least Occurrence in Life, from whence he cannot extract Fuel to feed his Spleen, and a large Share of Mischief to indulge his melancholy Imagination.

As he believes every the most trifling Accident, has its present and its future Meaning, so there is not a Dispensation of Providence, whether common or uncommon, but he explains dogmatically into a judicial Act of the offended Justice of the divine Being. He denies all settled Order in the Universe, and believes all that passes to be the immediate interposing Hand of the Almighty, dispersing Judgments without one Grain of Mercy to sinful Creatures. In short, he believes all other Attributes suspended, and can discern the Creator in no other Capacity, but as a stern Judge, surrounded with Threatenings, Terrors, and dreadful Miracles, punishing the smallest Offence with unrelenting Vengeance.

False Judgment on natural Events.

He has enregistered in his melancholy Memory, all the most shocking and terrible Judgments that have been inflicted on great and profligate Sinners, exaggerates every Circumstances of their Punishments, and with malicious self-torturing Ingenuity establishes a Similitude betwixt his own Case and theirs; but his fullen Heart cannot, dare not, call to Remembrance, or take the smallest Comfort from the many, the almost innumerable Instances of his Goodness, his long-suffering Mercy and Patience with Mankind. And when at any time they are forced upon his Mind, he damps their chearful Influence by some melancholly Reflection, some fancied Peculiarity in his own Case, that robs him of the Hope, and deprives him of the Benefit of every Gospel Promise, and of every Privilege he can expect from the Mercy and Beneficence of his Maker; and, in the End, by mere Force of a melancholy Imagination, he works himself up into a mad Fit of Despondency, and at last into that worst and most dreadful State of absolute Despair of Heaven and Happiness.

Falls into
Desponden-
cy and Des-
pair.

Character of
Mrs. B—.

This was the fatal and melancholy Case of Mrs. B—— of Devonshire. I knew that Gentlewoman the Envy of her Neighbourhood, her Happiness was almost proverbial, it was common for her Acquaintance to say, “ I was as happy and as chearful as

“ Mrs.

“ Mrs. B——.” She was happy in a Man of Sense, Good-nature, and Complaisance, for a Husband, who was doatingly fond of her : Her Circumstances were affluent, her Children, when I knew her, were mostly grown up, and some of them very happily settled in the World, and all of them behaved to her with the utmost Tenderneſs and Affection. In a Word, ſhe was poſſeſſed of every worldly Felicity, and had ſo juſt Senſe of Religion, as to enjoy them with Chearfulneſs and Moderation, and continued to do ſo, till the Sect of Methodiſts made a Noiſe in the Country. Her hoſpitable Diſpoſition brought her unhappily acquainted with ſome of that melancholy Tribe, and their Converſation ſoon ſoured her Temper, and caſt a Gloom upon the Chearfulneſs of her Diſpoſition ; and, in about a Year’s Time, they ſtole ſo much upon her Mind, that their enthuſiaſtic Acts of Devotion employed her whole Time, and fixed in her the melancholy Habit.

In this Diſpoſition, they ſoon raiſed Doubts and Scruples about Religion, Doubts they could not ſolve, Devils they could conjure up, but had not the Skill or Ad-dreſs to lay. She conſulted with their Oracles for Relief, but they were Dumb, and only puzzled her Underſtanding. She had Recourſe to long and tedious Prayers, was inceſſantly on her Knees, till her De-

votion impaired her Health, interfered with all the Duties of social Life, and weakened her Intellects, and every Day rendered her less capable of feeling or receiving that Comfort, which these busy Medlers had banished from her Soul. Tortured with endless Doubts, her rational Faith and Religion totally unhinged, she fell into the fatal State of Despondency and Despair. She would now sit for Hours in a Posture of Devotion, yet unable to utter one Word, as not daring to address the Throne of Grace, even for Mercy, the Gates of which she fancied shut against her; and at last when she could find her Speech, she would start from her Knees, crying out, in the most dismal Tone, “ What a Wretch am
 “ I? I see the Gates of Heaven open to
 “ all Men but me, all Mortals can press
 “ forward to the Lamb of God, but mi-
 “ serable me. I see my angry and in-
 “ censed Judge, knitting his Brows and
 “ frowning me into Perdition. Look yon-
 “ der are the Ministers of his Vengeance,
 “ ready to execute his Judgment upon me,
 “ and laugh at my Calamity. I see them
 “ pointing to a dismal Abyss, foaming
 “ with Fire and Sulphur, yet that is my
 “ Lot and Portion for evermore. Oh!
 “ whither shall I fly, where shall I hide
 “ myself from the Wrath that is to come?
 “ Where receive shelter from the fierce
 “ Anger of the Holy One of Israel?”

From

From this dismal Soliloquy she would return to her former Silence, and so alternately, till her Distemper grew into settled Madness, out of which there is very little Hopes of her Recovery.

How wretched, how miserable is such a Man's Case, who in the midst of Mercy, in the daily Enjoyment of Health, and many other valuable Blessings, that with loud Voice proclaim the Wisdom, the Goodness, and the Beneficence of a bountiful Creator, shall spurn those Blessings from him, and wantonly torture himself with Evils and fancied Horrors, that have no Existence but in his distemper'd Brain? While this Man lives a Slave to this gloomy Disposition, he feels a Hell within his Bosom, little short of the Torments of that Place of eternal Punishment, which he often braves, as unable to bear the dreadful Pangs of a despairing Conscience, And in the End into Suicide. and by laying violent Hands upon himself, plunges into Eternity into the Presence of that God, his gloomy Fancy has robbed of every Attribute, that can speak Peace to his despairing Soul. This is generally the fatal End, the dreadful Catastrophe of those that have indulged this melancholy low-spirited Disposition. How shocking the Representation, and how void of Reason and Understanding must that Man be, who is not alarmed at every Appearance of this

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dreadful Evil, and who dares not use all the Means in his Power to prevent the Progress of a Habit, that is pregnant with so many Evils? A Habit that banishes Peace, Joy, and every chearful Hope, from the unhappy Possessor here, and gives him so small a Chance for Happiness hereafter; for nothing but the unspeakable Mercy of the Almighty, can speak that Man into Bliss, who in the whole Course of his Life has denied the Existence of that Attribute in the Divinity, and by Suicide has renounced all Claim to his Beneficence.

The Consequences I have mentioned, as attending this fatal Malady are, one would imagine, too interesting, not to give the Alarm, and awaken the Attention of every reasonable Creature, and prompt them to use every Means to prevent the Growth and Progress of this gloomy Habit of the Mind. If Regard to their Peace, Tranquility, and Happiness here and hereafter, can have no Influence on their Understandings, to rouse them from this Lethargy of the Soul, and make them ashamed, as well as afraid of a Habit that disgraces Humanity. They are past Hope and without Cure. To those who are willing to avoid this State, and are desirous to prevent its Progress on the Mind, I
would

would recommend above all things, Exercise both of Body and Mind. The Soul of Man is naturally active, and all its bodily Powers are correspondent to that Disposition. If they are properly employed, the Soul and mental Powers preserve their Strength and Vigour, and the Organs of Sense their Activity and Delicacy of Sensation, whence, if Laziness, Idleness, and Indolence is indulged, both the one and the other contract, as it were, a Rust, the Juices become thick, and our Sensation so calous, that nothing can move us. If we find a Tendency in our Disposition to this Habit, we ought to employ our Minds in Subjects the most Interesting, that can best attract our Attention, and vary the Subject as often as they begin to tire, 'till the Soul has gained a Habit of abstracted Thinking, upon Subjects removed from the melancholy Cast. This now and then interchanged for moderate Exercise, may keep the mind imployed, and give her a chearful active Turn. All melancholy softening Objects ought to be avoided, especially Music of the melodious Kind; that lulls the Soul into a drowsy Calm, the State of all others to be the most dreaded: But that Species of Music that strikes strong upon the Ear, and rouses the Spirits, ought frequently to be indulged; for I apprehend there is a Force, a Physic in Music judiciously chosen, that

Exercise and Employment the best Preservation against its Progress.

Sprightly Music may have some Effect.

might cure other Degrees of Madness, besides that of the Bite of Fear.

Temperance
& sovereign
Remedy.

To moderate Exercise and Business properly adapted to our Genius and Disposition, in order to keep up the Spirits, and keep the mental Powers in Action, we ought to add an exact Temperance in Eating and Drinking; and, in some Cases, even Abstemiousness in both. The Air we breathe may have great Influence on our Temperament of Mind, and the Heaviness and Changeableness of our Climate, have, no Doubt, great Effects upon our Constitution, and these it may not be in every Persons Power to Change; but a proper Regimen of Diet may, in a great Measure, prevent its Effects, and enable us to preserve Health and Spirits, in Climates much more variable and malignant than any we breathe in the Island of Britain. Gross Meats that require a strong Digestion, and much Concoction, in such Situations as this Kingdom, generate gross Humours, thickens the Blood, and weakens the Tone of the animal Spirits; great Quantities of these, forced down by the Help of poignant Sauces, and a depraved Appetite, are the Source of most Diseases known in this Part of the World, but of none so much as Low-Spiritedness; which is so much peculiar to the English Nation, that its known
all

all over Europe, by the Name of the English Disease.

I CANNOT comprehend, that the Air of this Island is so much answerable for the Growth of this Malady amongst us, since the Damps and Fogs, to which this is generally attributed, are more frequent in Holland, and in some other Northern Countries, than with us; yet the Inhabitants are infinitely less subject to the amphibious Disorder that affects both Body and Mind than we are: And even in the more northern Parts of this Island, and in Ireland, where, especially in the last, the Damps are much greater than here, that Distemper is very little known amongst them, and neither here, nor elsewhere, are the lower Class of People so much afflicted with it, as the politer Sort; from whence I would conclude, that People of Fashion are so much subject to it from some Error in their Manner of Living. The labouring Man who never eats but to satisfy a natural Appetite, never creates a false Craving by high-seasoned Sauces, knows no other Relisher but Hunger, is a Stranger to this genteel Disease. Labour has braced his Nerves, and strengthened his Sinews, his Stomach not overloaded is capable of performing a regular Concoction; and though his Food, comparatively speaking, is gross, yet the superior Heat and Strength
of

of his digestive Powers, thus bred and strengthened by Labour, converts the whole into laudable Chile : Whereas our Nobility and Gentry, who never have the exquisite Pleasure of being Hungry, never eat but with a false and forced Appetite, whose puny, yet voracious Stomachs are constantly overloaded, and all the digestive Powers relaxed in their Tone, are cursed with the Fumes of Indigestion, and nothing but gross, raw, and crude Humours generate, that mix with the Mass of Blood, and discover themselves in a numberless Train of acute and chronic Diseases, whose very Names, as well as Nature, baffle the Skill of Physic, and send the unhappy Patient, after a few Years spent in Agony, to a hopeless Grave. But it is not only Intemperance in Eating, that is the Bane of our polite World ; but as if they had determined that their Aliment should, instead of Nourishment produce nothing but Diseases, they have chosen to ratify this luxurious Gluttony, at Times and Seasons when they are most noxious to the human Body. They have changed the Order and Times of their Forefathers, and never eat but when they intend to go to Rest ; and that Time which Nature designed to recruit our evaporated Spirits and Strength, is spent in vain Attempts of the Stomach to get rid of the monstrous Load with which she has been crammed, so that the digestive
Organs

Organs have no Rest, no Time to recruit, they are in constant Exercise, 'till they flag all at once, and leave the Patient Low-Spiritedness, Gouts, Sciatics, with the whole Tribe of cronic Disorders, as a Reward for a pampered Palate.

IN our neighbouring Country of France, even in that Part of it divided from us only by a narrow Channel, as they live temperately, rise early, use moderate Exercise, live upon light Foods that require but little Digestion, eat of these often, but sparingly, and never go to Bed with a loaded Stomach; they are chearful and alert in their Dispositions, and utter Strangers to the English Curse of Low-Spiritedness.

TEMPERANCE may not only prevent this Disorder, but I take some Days of Fasting and Abstinence to be the best Physic, and best Restorative to an English Constitution, afflicted with any of the Stages of this melancholy Distemper, or indeed with most other Disorders to which we are subject; for, I believe, every Man, the least conversant with the animal Œconomy, will acknowledge, that more Diseases flow from Intemperance in Eating, and Indigestion, than from all other Causes put together, but that Low-Spiritedness is the First-born, and sure Offspring of Luxury
and

and Sensuality, and as Temperance, Exercise, and Application to some Kind of Business, is the best Specific against the Disease, so it ought to be more valued, as it is the cheapest Form in the whole Materia Medica. It is the Produce of every Climate, may be gathered under every Hedge, and the Purchase of the meanest Subject in England; and so little offensive, so far from being nauseous, that the most delicate-palated Lady in the Kingdom may take it without a wry Face, much easier, and with infinite less Danger, than she can swallow a Dram of Citron, or Ratifia.

BUT having mentioned warm Cordials, a Recourse that most People have in Low-spirited Cases, and a Species of Pharmacy, that has enriched more Apothecaries, killed and ruined more Patients, than all the Diseases mentioned in the most sickly Bill of Mortality, I cannot lose an Opportunity of cautioning my Reader against a Remedy that is, at least, as bad as the Disease.

WANT of Spirits are complained of, the greedy Apothecary immediately recommends a Cordial, some Drops, &c. that is, in other Words, a weak Dram. The Patient takes it, and is exhilarated for some Moments, by these artificial reviving Spirits: The Experiment is repeated, till these Caustics (for they are nothing else in Degree)

gree) has eat off the fine Parts of the Nerves, by often stimulating them. Then the Dose must be increased till by their augmented Strength, these poisonous Spirits are enabled to enter a little deeper into the most sensible Organs of Sensation, and thus from one Step to another, till they have unbraced and debilitated the whole nervous System, and rendered the Patient a poor, paralite, senseless Drunkark, and, at last, furnishes him a painful Pass into the other World, by the Means of Dropsy, Jaundice, and Consumption. Thus indeed they are cured of the Disease of Low-Spiritedness, and all others; but it is to be hoped the Specific of Exercise and Temperance will be preferred by every wise Man, to this slow Poison. And I could wish that Gentlemen of the Faculty of Physic, who must be sensible how easy it is to beget the Habit of Draming, and how much it is the Scandal of the present Age, would expunge from their Dispensatories all spirituous Forms of every Denomination, and chuse for Officinals, such Drugs as yield their Virtues without a spirituous Vehicle, and, if possible, where they are obliged to make use of stimulatory Medicines, that they would prescribe them in dry Forms, at least Tincture or Electuary, or in some Shape, that may not put the Patient in Mind of a Dram, or induce him from
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the momentary Relief he may find, and the Authority of a Physicians Recipe to habituate himself to that base Vice of Drinking and Tipling.

F I N I S.



